A Beautiful Creature

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A Beautiful Creature

by Ooft

Summary

"For a minute, he was lying on the floor and realigning his back. The next, Winston was jumping on his stomach and nipping at his nose, growling and whining with his tail whipping back and forth. Before he could think, Will was responding in kind, scrabbling to get on his hands and knees, facing Winston and growling the same way, snapping his teeth into the air in an inviting, enticing manner. Grinning at his master's silliness, Winston leapt forward and the fight was on: each of them rearing onto their legs to take swipes, playfully nipping at each other and butting heads.

Winston won, of course, being young and agile, taking Will down with a big, slobbery kiss to the cheek and lying on his chest. Will wrapped his arms around his furry companion, wondering what the hell had happened to him. It seemed like a thing to call Doctor Lecter about, to ask if this was some strange, long-hidden response to his unfortunate childhood, but something told him that picking up the phone wouldn't be worth it. No, it was simply an indulgence. A brief thing."

In which Will sometimes likes to act like a dog.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Most of the things that have happened in Will's life, he can't remember having a specific origin. He doesn't remember when or where he first met Alana Bloom, can't recall when he first started losing his sanity working in the police force, isn't sure of the date his father died, even.

One thing he does distinctly remember, however, is the first time he did that *thing*. It's a weird thing, probably has a name and is probably more common than he's led himself to believe, but he still finds it a little weird, if not enjoyable at the same time.

For a minute, he was lying on the floor and realigning his back. The next, Winston was jumping on his stomach and nipping at his nose, growling and whining with his tail whipping back and forth. Before he could think, Will was responding in kind, scrabbling to get on his hands and knees, facing Winston and growling the same way, snapping his teeth into the air in an inviting, enticing manner. Grinning at his master's silliness, Winston leapt forward and the fight was on: each of them rearing onto their legs to take swipes, playfully nipping at each other and butting heads.

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When it kept happening each week, to the point of occurring almost regularly, Will realised that perhaps it wasn't a one-time thing, that maybe it really was something he was interested in.

He knows now that his suspicions were correct, but back then it all seemed so strange. It felt wrong showing up to work and worrying about whether there was still dog fur stuck in his hair from a morning spent playing on the floor with the dogs; wrong to stand at a crime scene and stare at all the grisly details, knowing that he'd go home after and unwind by acting as if he is a dog; wrong to act so human around the tiny group of people he is comfortable with and pretend he doesn't want to curl into a ball on the floor in the sun and fall asleep. He forced himself to do it all anyway, putting everyone else's comfort above his own in that way he always did.

Alana Bloom was the first to notice the change in Will's demeanor.

He had been away for a night in another state - he was helping the FBI with a crime scene for a particularly gruesome murder - and was looking forward to returning back home to his dogs, who were being minded by Alana.

When he pulled up in the driveway, frenzied barking came from inside the house. Will got out of the car and went to the porch, watching as the door opened from the inside and his

dogs poured out of the house, rushing to see who could reach him first in the small amount of space. Alana came out after, a grin wide on her face as she watched Will pet all the dogs and greet them by name.

“I think these guys might’ve missed you,” Alana said, laughter apparent in her voice. She had looked so sweet and kind back then, no hard lines and cold eyes like now.

“Just a little,” Will nodded, standing. The dogs seemed satisfied with his greeting and ran off to play in the snow together. “Thanks for looking after them.”

“Happy to help, but it’s not like they make it any work.” Alana watched them playing, still smiling, but with a distant look in her eye.

Rather than asking what Alana was thinking of, Will looked over at the dogs. They barked and growled at each other, kicking snow up beneath their paws and snuffling along the ground, sneezing or snorting when something tickled their nose.

Joe, a white, wire-coat dog and also the biggest of the pack, came bounding over to Will, digging her front paws into the ground and wiggling her rump in the air with an excited growl, trying to goad him into play fighting.

"Not now, Joe," Will shook his head as she jumped up onto him, "down, bud."

"What does she wanna do?" Alana asked.

Will's mind went blank. He'd remembered Alana was there in the sense that he knew he had to be careful what he did, but he hadn't remembered Alana in the sense that she was a living, sentient being, able to observe and form an understanding of his actions. "She wants to play tug-of-war."

It was a terrible lie, not really making all that much sense.

Alana nodded along anyway. "I'll play, if you want."

Joe ran off to join the others again.

"Oh, I'm sure you've got better places to be," Will said. Everyone always seemed so busy, which was just fine by him. It gave him more time to do the things he liked in peace, not needing to fear about how he'd be judged for whatever he decided to do in his spare time. Pretending he was a dog seemed much healthier and less strange than Freddie Lounds' claims of him being a serial killer.

"I haven't got anywhere to be. Unless you want me to go, of course." Alan's smile had turned tight, her shoulders stiff.

"No, stay if you want. Not like I'm gonna be the one with plans for the night," Will grinned at her, hoping it didn't look as strained as it felt.

Alana chuckled. "I thought you spent every Friday night out partying?"

"Party for one?" Will asked.

They both laughed and Will felt a little more at ease standing on two legs. A big part of him still wanted to collapse on the ground and go crawling on all fours, but enough tension had been relieved in his body that he had the strength to fight off his urges and focus on Alana instead.

"I'll have to go in an hour and a bit - I've got a date tonight," Alana said once they'd settled again.

"With who?" Will asked. Alana told him she was bisexual a few years before and since then, he'd always made an effort to be gender-inclusive when they discussed her love life. Admittedly, that wasn't often, given the rarity of them having a moment alone together to chat, but Alana seemed to appreciate the sentiment whenever Will could deliver it, giving him a curt, thankful nod each time he said something inclusive.

"A cute girl I met at a cafe." Alana smiled, biting the inside of her cheek.

It was a little surprising to hear about a girl. Despite Alana saying she was bisexual, she talked about men more often than women, though Will supposed that was fairly normal, given the ratios of heterosexual people to anyone queer, paired with the fact that Alana didn't have any real preference for gender.

"Is it your first date?" He asked.

"Second, actually. She's super nice." Alana's eyes shone as she spoke, warmth leaking into her voice.

Will nodded. "That's good."

"Have you been seeing anyone lately?" Alana asked.

He hadn't been on a date with anyone in over a decade. Why, he wasn't sure. Hannibal would say something along the lines of Will being too afraid to seek the comfort of others and not wanting to get too close for fear of hurting them. Will figured it was because no one interested him.

"The dogs keep me busy enough." The answer was more honest than he'd intended it to be, though Alana didn't know that. Given her chuckle, she didn't think too much about it.

He'd never really disclosed his sexuality to Alana (not that he could because he didn't really know) but Alana had always used the same inclusive terms as him, giving him the option to tell her about any kind of person. Rebuking her had never crossed his mind.

As him and Alana chatted idly, the dogs would come up and jump on him, tugging at his sleeves and the hem of his shirt in an effort to drag him to the ground. At one point, he went inside and grabbed the tug-of-war rope, but when the dogs realised he wasn’t going to get on his knees and play properly with his teeth, they cocked their heads and ran off again, leaving him to stand and watch in dejection.

“You seem different,” Alana said, frowning. Will had been rejected by the dogs for a third time in the span of ten minutes.

“I’m just tired,” Will answered. A more accurate answer would have been ‘exhausted’, but worrying Alana wasn’t on his to-do list. “The storms in the area have been a little rough lately.”

“The noise wakes you up?” Alana asked, eyebrows furrowed in a sympathetic way.

Will nodded.

“Is there anything else going on? Are you okay?” Alana stepped toward him, hand outstretched. He couldn’t help but flinch away, making her snatch her hand back and frown, probably annoyed with herself for misreading him. Will doesn’t blame her for it - he’s a difficult person to understand.

Telling her what he likes to do in his spare time seemed so easy, but he refrained from opening up. It had been difficult enough already to appear sane, let alone to keep up the guise of normalcy he displayed in her presence, worried that anything less would make her scared of him. Psychiatrists were supposed to have seen it all, though it was obvious many of them didn’t want to heal the human mind and instead wanted to observe it, to watch illness fester and take hold of its host until medication had to be prescribed. Mental illness was a business; the more people that became ill, the more psychiatrists can be seen, the more medicine can be sold, the more money can be made and if people ended up killing themselves, it was probably considered population control.

“I’m fine. As fine as you can be, investigating murders.” Will smiled, hoping the joke would land.

It always did with Alana, who scoffed a laugh, sobering after. “Is Doctor Lecter good for you?”

“He’s a psychiatrist,” Will drawled, giving Alana a sidelong glance and raising his eyebrow, “how good can he be?”

“Oh, shush,” Alana laughed, shaking her head. After a few too many arguments, she’d given up trying to convince Will of the merit in psychiatry. Now she took jokes about it at face value and that made Will feel respected, like someone was finally beginning to understand him as a *person,* not just as an FBI assistant with an empathy disorder and a billion other things wrong with him.

They chatted for another half an hour, eventually bidding each other goodbye. While Will was grateful for Alana’s help and liked having her around to speak with, he was glad to see her get in her car and drive away, disappearing in the distance behind a trail of snow.

The dogs were happy that it meant their master could get on his knees and play with them.

Jack Crawford was the second to notice a change in Will's demeanor.

"You been keeping up your appointments with Doctor Lecter?" Jack asked.

They were sitting in the car, driving back to the FBI headquarters from Will's home. Jack had surprised him, almost catching him playing on the floor with his dogs and seeing what the life of Will Graham was truly like for the first time. Thankfully, one of the dogs - Will thinks it might have been Sadie, the little angel - started barking, alerting Will to a black SUV driving down to the house. He had just enough time to straighten his clothes and get to the door before Jack saw anything.

Will knew there was trouble ahead when he got in the van to find the radio turned off, but Jack had been silent for the first twenty minutes of the trip, scaring the shit out of Will when he finally decided to ask about Will's appointments.

"Sorry, what?" Will had heard him perfectly fine, he just needed time to come up with a list of possible directions that the conversation could go in so he wouldn't be too off-balance.

"Your appointments with Doctor Lecter. Have you been going?" Jack repeated.

"Doesn't he send you a summary of each session?" Will asked.

Jack nodded. "Yes, he does. I just thought that given how friendly you two have been lately, you might've come up with an agreement to get out of your appointments."

"Trust me, Jack," Will swallowed a scoff, "Doctor Lecter wouldn't miss a single appointment with me, no matter what."

"So you are becoming friends?" Jack asked.

"Would it make you happy if I said yes?"

"Will."

"He's my psychiatrist, Jack. We're not gonna be friends anytime soon."

"I'm just glad you're being civil."

'Civil' was one way of putting it. For what it was, Will figured it was good, what he and Doctor Lecter had going: not quite friends, but not simply co-workers, either. Doctor Lecter was much more clever than he let on, something Will was being cautious of, but he found it much more intriguing than threatening, wanting to know more about Doctor Lecter, to discover whatever secret it was he seemed to be hiding from the world.

He was thankful when Jack turned the radio's music back up and didn't ask anymore questions.

Beverly Katz was the third to notice a change in Will's demeanor.

They didn't get to talk often, something Will found regrettable. Beverly was smart, he thought, often seeing and understanding things he said with ease, not needing much of a push to come to conclusions in regards to the team's forensics. She was useful in a crime scene, too, always knowing the kind of information Will would want to glean from the area and presenting it to him in a way that was easy to interpret, not leaving anything up to chance and more than willing to answer his questions, though humble when it came to discussing her findings. Her knack for humour was good when things got a little too tense, quick to laugh when Will made an amusing comment and even quicker to add her own little quip.

Beverly was good, Will had decided. She offered stability and kindness where it couldn't often be found, not expecting anything in return but respect, something she'd certainly earnt.

Despite the comfort Will found in Beverly's presence, he couldn't help but fidget and twitch as they looked over the forensic report for one of the bodies together. It had been a long and gruelling day, leaving Will with nothing but a need to go home and cuddle up by the fire with the dogs for the next week, not getting up to do anything besides the bare essentials. Depression naps were always a comforting thought, he'd found, even if they were unrealistic.

"You okay, bud?" Beverly asked, snapping Will out of his comforting thoughts for the fifth time in an hour.

Will nodded, pushing his glasses up higher on his nose. "Yeah."

"You know - and don't take this the wrong way - but you've been looking kinda tired lately," Beverly said as she grabbed a plastic sheet and laid it over the body they were looking at.

"You saying I look like shit?" Will smirked, ignoring her warning on purpose.

"You always look like shit," Beverly raised an eyebrow at him, smirking in turn, "now, you look like *tired* shit."

"And here I was, thinking I had all my co-workers charmed. I think I need to buy you coffee more often," Will said.

Beverly tapped her chin and frowned, nodding. "You might be onto something, there."

"I'll bring you one tomorrow," Will said.

"Oh my God, you're gonna make yourself order a coffee for me? Even though you hate talking to strangers? You're the bestest friend I ever had." Beverly grinned at him, punching his arm as she brushed past him and out of the room, beckoning for Will to follow her. "I know social stuff isn't really your thing, but I'm going to a bar downtown tonight. You wanna come?"

"Will there be many people there?" Will asked, going against his better judgement. He was sorely missing his dogs (and pretending to *be* one of them) but a few drinks couldn't hurt.

“No, it’s never too busy. It’s actually kinda nice. Owner knows a thing or two about whiskey, so you might like him.” Beverly grinned when she noticed Will rolling his eyes.

“I’ll go for a bit,” Will said, following Beverly out of the building and into the carpark. At the flick of her head, he climbed into her pick-up truck, still unable to get over the way it screamed ‘Beverly Katz’ with its tough, rugged appearance. It made him laugh.

Luckily, it had been a day where Jack picked Will up in the morning and brought him in for work. Even if the disturbance to his isolation was a goddamn nuisance, Will was grateful that he could go out and get drunk without needing to worry about his car.

After a few rounds of beer and whiskey, Beverly tried to pick up on their conversation from before, prompting Will with questions about why he looked so tired. Reluctantly, Will complied, telling her how the case had been affecting his mental health. She nodded along, sympathetic and understanding, taking everything he said at face value and offering any support she could. Her lack of analysis and honest advice made Will feel at ease, more than it probably should have, but with everyone else constantly spectating and judging him, it was good to have Beverly treat him like a normal human being, to be willing to joke around and shoot the shit.

At the end of the night, with his head swimming in a way that was both pleasant and unpleasant, Will called a cab and bid Beverly goodbye after making sure her boyfriend got to the bar to pick her up; she didn’t need protecting, he knew that, but it was still reassuring to keep an eye out for her safety. Her boyfriend seemed nice, not jealous of Will in the slightest and completely at ease with the two of them being drunk, even joking around with Will and teasing Beverly as the three of them waited for Will’s cab to arrive.

As the cab peeled away from the curb, Will thought of how nice it would be to get home and hang out with the dogs.

Hannibal was the fourth to notice a change in Will’s demeanor. He is the first to understand why.

Him noticing wasn’t very important. Will isn’t even sure of when it happened, but it was probably unnervingly soon.

No, Will is more interested in the fact that Hannibal *understands* him. They’ve been on the run from the FBI for a few months, now, hiding and fleeing at uneven intervals, careful to cover their tracks and only leave misleading evidence in their wake. It’s exhilarating in the same way that it’s exhausting, and each time they pack up and take off, Will finds himself hoping beyond hope that they stop again soon.

It’s at this time that they’re living in Australia, packed in a squat, outback home. Bushland surrounds them on all sides, hues of yellows and browns, no shades of green visible. The dryness of the land is refreshing, Will finds, reflecting on the harsh terrain and all the prickly flora dotting the dusty ground, scattered apart, like they’ve been thrown down carelessly and left to fend for themselves. Despite the dryness, Hannibal has managed to make himself a

little greenhouse that grows herbs and vegetables, the only real sign of life available, other than the two men and the occasional wandering animal. It's all so very different from when they lived in Europe and *especially* when they'd lived in Asia, where there were always people and greenery.

Will misses the dogs sorely, longs for them with every passing day and wishes he could somehow make them appear beside him. If he could, he'd kiss each one of them on the head and let them take him to the ground with their wave of affection, laughing when they slobbered on him and not lifting up a finger to defend himself from their excited onslaught, too lost in his happiness to muster up annoyance.

Hannibal notices that Will is upset, offering silent support. Will can tell Hannibal wants to speak with him about it, but Will isn't ready to confront that issue yet, so he takes all comfort he can when Hannibal squeezes his shoulder or kisses his cheek.

To bury the empty void of loneliness Will feels without the dogs, he spends more time fishing. Despite the sparse nature of the land, he comes across plenty of rivers and lakes that are good for fishing when he heads further south - though not too far, because that would take him into the city, according to Hannibal - finding himself enjoying the solitude of it all, the hot wind brushing lazily by and the even hotter sun beating down on him from above. After a few months (and many sunburns) his skin has gone brown and his hair has gotten a few shades lighter, the tips of it a mousy brown colour, due to his cap covering the majority of his mop and thus preserving the colour.

Learning about all the new types of fish in Australia has been challenging, but Will finds it a welcome distraction, occupying a lot of time he'd otherwise spend moping around. From an Aboriginal bushman he learns the art of 'yabbying', catching little crustaceans (appropriately) called 'yabbies' from the muddy water. Hannibal fries them up for dinner, serving them with a salad that he's curated in the greenhouse.

Will still feels sad, but he's more distracted from it. There's no need for him to get on the floor and act like a dog anymore, that can be put behind him and left alone.

That's what he thinks, anyway. Then one day, there's a mangy orange dog sitting in his front yard, blood dripping from a large, swollen cut on her forehead and her belly hanging until it almost touches the ground.

Without thinking, Will drops down to his knees in front of her and approaches slowly, cautious of her snarling teeth and the low rumble with which she growls. When he's five metres from her, he stops. Because he was planning on going fishing, he has some baits in his pocket with meat on them. Pulling one out slowly - *so slowly* - he unravels it and takes the meat out, placing it on the dusty ground lying between the two of them as a peace offering, watching as she drags herself forward and snatches up the meat, chewing ferociously and swallowing.

Will crawls away from her and goes into the house, heading straight for the kitchen. Hannibal is in there making breakfast and he watches as Will grabs some meat from the fridge, but doesn't make any comment.

The dog is still outside, the blood on her face drying in the morning sun and matting her fur horribly. Careful to not appear too violent and noisy, Will slices the packet of kangaroo meat open and takes a piece out, putting it between his teeth in the same way a dog would, hoping it might make the dog before him less hostile. Eyes glittering, the dog watches as Will crawls over to it on all fours. He drops the meat near the dog and retreats to the front door, watching as the dog sniffs the meat and bites into it, tearing pieces away and gulping them down. Her belly ripples occasionally, which looks incredibly uncomfortable.

When the dog has finished eating, Will repeats the process, then does it again and again until all the meat is gone. After, he sits on the doorstep and watches the dog sleep.

“I see you’ve made friends with a dingo,” Hannibal says from behind Will, making him startle. “An injured, pregnant one, no less.”

“A dingo?” Will asks.

“A wild dog. Dangerous, if they’re hungry.” A slight smile twitches at Hannibal’s lips.

Will shrugs. “You’ll get along well, then. Two of a kind.”

“Three,” Hannibal says, lowering himself to the floor behind Will and wrapping his limbs around him in a hug, “you forget yourself, darling.”

They’re both quiet for a moment as they stare at the dingo. “Do you think she’ll stay?” Will asks, leaning into Hannibal’s embrace.

“I’m sure if you keep feeding her, she most certainly will,” warmth and laughter seeps into his voice as he says it, “she seemed to trust you.”

Will stiffens, unsure of how to broach the subject with Hannibal. He’s never told anyone before, but he’s also never been this comfortable with another person, so he supposes there’s a first time for everything.

“You saw that?” Will asks. He’s aware as Hannibal slips a hand under his shirt and rubs his belly, fingers gliding up and down over his skin. The sensation makes him want to collapse into Hannibal completely, but he forces himself to stay sitting up and present in the moment, watching the sleeping dingo and her rippling belly.

“You feeding her? Of course. I was curious as to why you were taking meat from the fridge.” Hannibal says.

“What I did wasn’t strange to you?” Maybe Hannibal doesn’t quite understand. Surely the situation was absurd to a man as refined as himself.

Hannibal chuckles. “Were you behaving like a dog for the dingo’s sake, or your own?”

“Both,” Will admits.

“We are all animals, Will. Some of us just respond differently,” Hannibal says, curling his spare hand into Will’s hair and scrunching the strands in a comforting manner, “if you wish to

lie in the sun or be petted, you need but to ask. I would even encourage you to roll in the dirt, if you like, as long as you clean up after yourself."

"You wouldn't mind?" Will asks. None of it seems real.

"Not at all." Hannibal kisses the back of his head, gently scratching at his scalp at the same time.

Will groans and tilts his head *just so,* letting Hannibal scratch at the end of his hair, beside the spot where his skull and spine connect. "Thanks, Hannibal," he breathes out.

Hannibal doesn't respond, but Will can imagine him saying something along the lines of 'you are most welcome, Will', or 'you need not thank me, Will'.

They sit like that for another hour, Hannibal bringing both hands to rub Will's belly and occasionally kissing his neck. Neither of them care about the heat and the way it makes them both sweat, too preoccupied in each other's presence and letting the stickiness give them a reason to be closer. The dingo wakes up after her belly makes a particularly violent convulsion, prompting her to lift her blood-stained head and regard the two humans with her light brown eyes, blinking slowly and lowering her head back to her paws in acceptance. She doesn't fall asleep again, instead watching the men in front of her with cocked ears.

"Come, we should go inside before it gets too hot," Hannibal says, nudging Will. "I will leave a bowl of water and some more food for our friend."

Will nods, standing and following Hannibal into the house. As he said he would, Hannibal grabs a bowl of water and some pieces of kangaroo meat, taking them outside and leaving them near the doorstep for the dingo to have when she feels like it. Hopefully, it will be soon, otherwise the meat will spoil in the sun and Will knows Hannibal will be a little miffed about the waste.

That night, Hannibal sits in bed reading and for the first time, Will crawls up beside him and lays his head on Hannibal's lap, smiling shyly when Hannibal's fingers find their way to his hair and tease it, scratching gently behind his ears. Soon, Hannibal puts his book away and Will shuffles off him, letting him lay down. Upon resting his head on Hannibal's shoulder, Hannibal reaches down to stroke Will's back, but Will shakes his head. He's had enough of being a dog for the day.

"I just want to cuddle for now, if that's okay," Will mumbles against Hannibal's skin.

"Of course." Hannibal wraps his arms around Will's waist and shoulders, holding him close. A few moments of silence pass, and then, "you are the most beautiful creature I've ever seen."

Will smiles and falls asleep with those words echoing around his head. No dreams came to him that night.

After a week of feeding the dingo, Will finds that he has earnt her trust. Each day goes by with her drifting closer and closer to the front door, until today she is lying on the doorstep. As Will opens the door, she startles, on her feet and wobbling away in an instant, her swollen belly slowing her movements significantly. Will steps outside and nods to her, lying down in the dirt beside the doorstep and leaving it empty for her to come and reclaim her spot, without worry of him attacking her. Wary, her eyes rake over his prone form, the exposure of his throat and belly, before deciding to return to the doorstep and lay herself down, tongue lolling out and panting as her body soaks in the heat and tries to fight off drowsiness.

In the midmorning, Hannibal brings them both water, leaving a bowl for the dingo and a cup for Will. The dingo watches Hannibal, but doesn't startle the same way she did when Will first left the house, instead staying completely still as Hannibal reaches past her to place the bowl down. Will watches him too, smiling when Hannibal reaches over and rubs his leg.

At noon, Will retreats into the house and watches through the windows as the world around them becomes unbearably hot in the mid-afternoon, heat waves rising from the dusty ground and creating a mirage.

The dingo outside yelps and Will is moving in an instant, opening the front door to find her writhing in pain. Hannibal comes up behind him.

"She's in labour. Bring her inside," Hannibal says, leaving Will and heading for the kitchen.

Will picks her up as best he can, though it's difficult with her biting and snarling, kicking her legs while convulsing in agony. He lays her down in the living room.

Hannibal comes in with several blankets that he instructs Will to lay on the floor beneath the dingo, then pops out again and comes back with bowls of water and a large stick that he gives to the canine. She bites down on it with ferocious force, snapping it and proceeding to chew harshly, seizing with pain every few seconds.

Will watches in horrified fascination as she gives birth to three pups, tiny, soft and blind things that cling to their mother. After the three hour ordeal, the dingo's head flops to the ground and she falls asleep, leaving her babies to suckle at her stomach, still filthy and covered in fluid. Hannibal cleans their fur as best he can, while Will gently scrubs the week-old blood from the dingo's face.

Will spends the next few weeks building a shelter for the dingoes, an area of shade that they can rest in when they return to the outside world. For now, the mother dingo seems content to be inside with the men, basking in the cold, conditioned air. Her pups grow, their eyes opening and their ears unfolding, legs becoming stronger and allowing them to take tentative steps, leaving little bits of baby fur in the house that Will is more than happy to clean.

After six weeks, the mother dingo decides she's had enough of her babies. Will lies on the floor in front of the window and she pads up beside him, dropping her boisterous pups against his stomach one-by-one, before strutting to Hannibal in the kitchen and barking at him until he lets her outside. Will watches through the window as she runs around the front yard, rolling in the dirt and shaking it off, tongue lolling from her mouth, a silly grin wide on her face.

Hannibal sees Will in the living area with the pups on his belly and smiles. “Be careful they don’t bite your ears.”

As if he understood the warning, one of the pups comes up to Will’s face and nips playfully at his ear. The action is clumsy and unrefined, sharp teeth burying into the skin and tearing it. Will reaches up and bats away at the pup’s nose, pushing him back down toward his belly, where the pup’s siblings are biting at each other’s ears instead. At the brushing of his fingers, Will realises the damage in his ear isn’t too bad, only a slight puncture.

Will settles on the floor again and chuckles as the pups playfight. In his mind, all is good and well.

End Notes

I don't know where exactly this came from, but it was sort of a self-indulgent, fluffy thing? I'm not really into BDSM/pet play stuff, but this sort of just happened. I don't see it as sexual, though, to be honest, just a habit Will has.

Now, I know there's a whole thing about Cuba and all that, but I would love to see Hannibal and Will end up in Australia. I feel like it would be a very 'them' thing, living in the outback of South Australia, (somewhat) near wineries and vineyards, where Hannibal and Will could make friends with the Aboriginal people that sometimes drift by. Personally, I think Will would like the juxtaposition of the cold isolation back in Wolf Trap to the hot isolation of South Australia.

Another note: I love Beverly Katz and I will never forgive Hannibal for killing her. She deserved better.

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